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ABSTRACT

A central goal of America Reads Challenge sites is to serve children who most need help in reading. This booklet provides tip sheets on finding and serving economically disadvantaged Title I children, children with disabilities, linguistically and culturally diverse children, migrant children, and preschool children so that they can benefit from participation in an America Reads Challenge site. Tips for including children with disabilities include: (1) establish a philosophy of inclusion by building the program on a philosophy that says all children benefit from services that value and recognize the importance of diversity, attracting volunteers who can help support inclusion, and including children with disabilities in promotional materials; (2) make contacts before school ends by contacting the director of special education in the local school district, asking local schools to contact families who have children with special needs, and meeting with teachers and parents of children with disabilities; (3) link volunteers with potential trainers by establishing partnerships with local school personnel and parents; and (4) select sites that are accessible to children and adults with disabilities. A list of organizations is provided for further information about including children with disabilities in the program. (CR)

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TIPS FOR FINDING AND SERVING CHILDREN WHO MOST NEED HELP IN READING

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AMERICA READS CHALLENGE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC
1998

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TIPS FOR

FINDING AND SERVING CHILDREN

WHO MOST NEED HELP IN READING

A central goal of America Reads Challenge sites is to serve children who most need help in reading. These children can include Title I children, children with disabilities, linguistically and culturally diverse children, migrant children, and preschool children. This booklet provides tip sheets on finding and serving these children, so that they can benefit from participation in an America Reads Challenge Site.

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Including Children Participating in Title I Programs

Why This Is Important

The Title I program provides funds to help high-poverty schools improve the educational achievement of children who may fail to meet academic standards. Nearly 9 million children participate in Title I programs. A majority of these children are in kindergarten through third grade, and most receive extra help in reading. Recent research indicates that reading skills and achievement drop off significantly for those children who do not read during the summer and that this summer slowdown has a particularly severe effect on disadvantaged Title I children. Title I children are also among those least likely to have opportunities to read during summer months. For these reasons Title I children would benefit greatly from being included in your America Reads Challenge site.

Tips for Greater Involvement

1. Before the school year ends, contact your local school districts to obtain the names of Title I coordinators; 95 percent of school districts receive Title I funds.

2. The Title I coordinator can help identify children who need reading assistance and can help the site coordinate its activities with ongoing reading activities in the school, including summer school programs.

3. Ask the Title I coordinator or local schools to contact families with Title I children and tell them about your program.

4. Title I programs may offer a ready supply of reading partners through Title I schools' ongoing efforts to get parents involved in their children's learning.

5. Many Title I staff are trained reading specialists whose expertise can be useful in planning programs, training tutors in effective teaching strategies, and selecting appropriate materials.

6. If a site serves Title I students, available Title I funds may be used to pay for materials, training, and related activities.

7. Encourage Title I staff to stay involved with your program, to follow up with tutors, and to provide additional training when necessary.

8. Title I staff's training and expertise may be helpful for site evaluation.

Where You Can Get Information and Assistance (Federal, State, and Local Resources)

- Compensatory Education Programs (Title I Programs)
  U.S. Department of Education
  600 Independence Avenue, SW
  Washington, DC 20202-6132
  Web: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/CEP
  Tel: 202-260-0826; fax: 202-260-7764

- Office of Educational Research and Improvement
  U.S. Department of Education
  555 New Jersey Avenue, NW
  Washington, DC 20208
  Tel: 202-219-2169; fax: 202-219-2160

- ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication (ERIC/REC)
  Indiana University
  Smith Research Center, Suite 150
  2805 East 10th Street
  Bloomington, IN 47408-2698
  Tel: 1-800-925-7853; fax: (812) 855-4220
  Web: http://www.indiana.edu/~eric_rec

- International Reading Association (IRA)
  800 Barksdale Road
  P. O. Box 8139
  Newark, DE 19714-8139
  Tel: 1-800-336-7223; 302-731-1600; fax: 302-737-0878
  Web: http://www.reading.org

- National Coalition of ESEA Title I Parents
  Edmonds School Building
  1541 14th Street, NW
  Washington, DC 20005
  Tel: 202-547-9286

- National Association of Early Childhood Specialists
  in State Departments of Education (NAECSSDE)
  Ms. Ruth Flynn, President
  Missouri State Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
  P.O. Box 480
  Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480

- National Association of State Title I Directors (NASTID)
  444 North Capitol Street, Suite 706
  Washington, DC 20001

This list can serve as a starting point for identifying resources available in your community. We encourage you to explore other options to find additional resources to support your site.

Including Children with Disabilities

Why This Is Important

Actively including children with disabilities in your READ*WRITE*NOW! program will ensure that all children benefit from your program, enrich your program, allow you to celebrate individual differences, and enhance the learning program for all children. While you may need special assistance to serve some children with disabilities, the vast majority of children with disabilities are not severely impaired and can be included with minimal accommodations.

Tips for Greater Involvement

1. Establish a philosophy of inclusion.

   - Build your program on a philosophy that says all children benefit from services that value and recognize the importance of diversity.
   - Attract volunteers who can help you support inclusion by describing your intention to reach out to children with disabilities and include them in your site.
   - Include children with disabilities in your promotional materials.

2. Make contacts before school ends.

   - Contact the director of special education in the local school district(s) you are serving, because most children with disabilities are served through the special education support system provided at school.
   - Ask your local schools to contact families who have children with special needs and tell them about your program.
   - Meet with the teachers and parents of children with disabilities who will be at your site. Consult with teachers about what specialized materials, if any, might be needed, what approaches and techniques are successful, and what kinds of adaptations a child may need to participate in your program.

3. Link volunteers with potential trainers.

- Establish partnerships with local school personnel, especially the Director of Special Education, special education teachers, and therapists. They may be able to provide training and materials for your program, and information about best practices.

- Encourage school personnel to stay involved with your program, to follow up with tutors, and to provide additional training when necessary.

- Establish partnerships with parents who can provide support and training to volunteers who will work with their children. The parents of children with disabilities are accustomed to being active in planning their children's education.

- Ask whether special education offices in local school districts can provide training for tutors on the best ways to work with children who may have disabilities that have not yet been identified.

- Contact the local Directors of Special Education if you suspect that a child appears to have an unidentified learning disability. If a child needs to be formally referred to special education, this referral should be made by certified school district personnel. You may wish to provide the parents of children who may have unidentified learning disabilities with an information sheet on resources for children with special needs available from the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY). Contact information for NICHCY is provided below.

4. Select sites that are accessible to children and adults with disabilities.

Where You Can Get Information and Assistance (Federal, State, and Local Resources)

You can contact the following individuals and organizations for information about including children with disabilities in your summer program.

- U.S. Department of Education
  Office of Special Education Programs
  600 Independence Avenue, SW
  Room 3086 MES
  Washington, DC 20202-4651
  Tel: 202-205-5507; fax: 202-260-0416; TDD: 202-205-5467
  Web: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/

- Local Director of Special Education who works for your local school district

- National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)
  P.O. Box 1492
  Washington, DC 20013-1492
  Tel: 1-800-695-0285; e-mail: nichcy/@aed.org; web: http://www.nichcy.org

- Educational Resources Information Center Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education, ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education, Council for Exceptional Children
  1920 Association Drive
  Reston, VA 20191-1589
  Tel: 1-800-328-0272; TTY: 703-264-9449; e-mail: ericec@cec.sped.org;
  Web: http://www.cec.sped.org/ericec.htm

- Some Head Start and Migrant Head Start Centers offer summer programs. All serve children with disabilities. To get a list of contacts in your area, contact Head Start at
  Tel: 202-205-8572; fax: 202-260-9336
  Web: http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb/

- Learning Disabilities Association (a national nonprofit membership organization)
  4156 Library Road
  Pittsburgh, PA 15234
  Tel: 412-341-1515; fax: 412-344-0224; web: http://ldanatl.org

- National Association For Parents of the Visually Impaired, Inc.
  P.O. Box 317
  Watertown, MA 02272-0317
  Tel: 1-800-562-6265

- National Information Center on Deafness (NICD) Shared Reading Project
  Gallaudet University
  800 Florida Avenue, NE
  Washington, DC 20002-3695
  Tel: 202- 651-505; TTY: 202-651-5052; fax: 202-651-5054;
  E-mail: nicd@gallux.gallaudet.edu; web: http://www.gallaudet.edu:80/~nicd/

- National Organization of Parents of Blind Children (NOPBC)
  1800 Johnson Street
  Baltimore, MD 21230
  Tel: 410-659-9314; fax: 410-685-5653
  E-mail: nfb@access.dgex.net; web: http://www.nfb.org

- Orton Dyslexia Society (a national nonprofit membership organization)
  8600 LaSalle Road
  Chester Building
  Suite 382
  Baltimore, MD 21286-2044
  Tel: 1-800-222-3123, 410-296-0232

- Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic (application approval required for services)
  20 Roszel Road
  Princeton, NJ 08540
  Tel: 1-800-221-4792; fax: 609-987-8116; e-mail: custserv@rfbd.org
  Web: http://www.rfbd.org

This list can serve as a starting point for identifying resources available in your community. We encourage you to explore other options to find additional resources to support your site in serving all children, including children with disabilities.

Including Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Children

Why This Is Important

America's linguistically and culturally diverse families bring valuable assets to our country, but their children do not always have access to high-quality education programs that address their special linguistic needs. Reading in their native language and English will get children involved in literacy experiences that can lead to academic success, greater job opportunities, and fulfillment in life.

Tips for Greater Involvement

1. Contact your local school and ask the bilingual or English as a Second Language office to identify children who most need help in reading. Inform their families about reading opportunities of your site.

2. Welcome parents to your reading program; they are the first and most important teachers of their children. Encourage family members to read together each night in their native language or English, and to visit the library monthly. Your reading program, school, and the local library can help parents identify books that are interesting and appropriate for each child's current stage of development.

3. Reach out to language-minority children and parents about the importance of your reading program through presentations at school meetings or community events. Encourage parents, teachers, paraprofessionals, community members, and older students to become tutors.

4. Recruit volunteer tutors and advertise your reading program through local native-language television and radio stations, newspapers, newsletters, and community bulletin boards. Post notices in English and in the native language. If translation help is needed, contact your school or district bilingual/English as a Second Language office.

5. Conduct the tutoring sessions at a convenient location, such as a school, community center, church, temple, or apartment complex. Carefully consider the best time for all participants involved in tutoring. Many parents work long hours and children often must care for younger siblings.

6. High-interest story books for your program should be available in English and in the child's native language. Predictable books that use repetitive patterns or subjects familiar to children will help emergent readers. More books are being published in languages other than English each year. Ask your local library and school to help you find developmentally appropriate books.

7. Read in English or in the child's native language, depending on the comfort level of the child. Children have the capacity to learn to read in more than one language. A child who has developed reading skills in his or her native language can quickly transfer them to English.

8. Select tutors who can appreciate the child's language and cultural diversity. Tutor training should stress attention to individual student's needs, a positive outlook, flexibility, patience, and cultural sensitivity. Your training should include information on using appropriate language to correct errors, pointing to objects or pictures, repeating at a slower rate, pausing, and giving plenty of praise. Allow time for talking about what the child has read, in order to develop concepts introduced during reading.

9. Children may be shy or hesitant when trying out new reading skills; they may worry about making mistakes. It may be of benefit for the tutor to read to the child for the first few sessions. Give the child more time when needed and be sure to correct the child in an appropriate way, giving examples of correct answers. Remember reading should be comfortable, challenging, and fun!

10. Collaborate with a parental literacy program, religious organization, local business, or college in order to recruit tutors, obtain materials, and locate funding sources. If a parental literacy program is not available for language-minority parents, start one in your community.

Where You Can Get More Information and Assistance (Federal, State, and Local Resources)

- National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (NCBE) collects, analyzes and disseminates information relating to the effective education of linguistically and culturally diverse learners in the United States. NCBE provides information through its World Wide Web server and produces a weekly e-mail news bulletin, Newsline, and a topical electronic discussion group, NCBE Roundtable.

- National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education
  The George Washington University
  1118 22nd Street, NW
  Washington, DC 20037
  E-mail: askncbe@ncbe.gwu.edu; web: http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu
  Tel: 202-467-0867; fax: 800-531-9347

- Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA)
  U. S. Department of Education
  600 Independence Avenue, SW
  MES Rm. 5086
  Washington, DC 20202-6510
  Web: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OBEMLA
  Tel: 202-205-5463; fax: 202-205-8737

- Project FLAME (Family Literacy: Aprendiendo, Mejorando, Educando).
  Center for Literacy
  University of Illinois at Chicago
  1040 W. Harrison (M/C 147)
  Chicago, IL 60607
  Tel: Dr. Flora Rodriguez-Brown, contact, 312-996-3013

Including Migrant Children

Why This Is Important

Migrant agricultural families are probably the most highly mobile population of all rural families. Migrant children experience many obstacles to school success because of language differences, significant poverty, and disruptions in school attendance as a result of their families' work. Migrant families, although they may work in communities only a few weeks, have strong ethnic identities and come from cultures rich in oral tradition. Encourage children to share stories, songs, and games in their native language. Research shows that language development builds a strong foundation for reading ability and achievement in every language.

Tips for Greater Involvement

1. Before families enter your community to work in the fields, contact the local migrant education director or recruiter, local migrant services council, or local agricultural employers (growers and processors) to prepare for migrant family involvement in your program and to identify children who most need help.

2. Recruit families using the families' native languages. (Spanish, Vietnamese, Khmer, Laotian, and Haitian Creole are among the languages spoken by migrant families.)

3. Support summer programs for migrant children by aligning tutors' schedules with already scheduled migrant education and migrant Head Start summer sessions. Recruit middle-school and high school youth as reading partners for preschool and elementary school children.

4. Schedule other tutoring time with parents and children on weekends and evenings to accommodate seasonal work schedules.

5. Encourage local partners to provide incentives such as prepaid phone calling cards, native language films/videos, food, and games for families and their children.

6. Expand the concept of "home visits" to include visits to migrant camps, community centers, processing facilities, or churches where several families may be identified and served together.

7. Encourage families to share their family stories, traditions, songs, and games. Create bilingual books with students based on oral traditions. Recruit older children to help translate and write the stories. Follow up by reading a book or story in English that provides a similar theme or idea.

8. Spend time learning from your students. Learn a few everyday phrases or their favorite song. Create a reading ritual-- a special way to start and end tutoring sessions that mirrors your student's individuality and special interests.

9. Find ways to keep in touch with children as they travel. Include simple maps, pre-stamped post cards, checklists of where children are going, sights they'll see, famous people who have preceded them, or books that relate to the families' journey.

Where You Can Get More Information and Assistance (Federal, State, and Local Resources)

- If you don't know when or where migrant workers may be in your community, contact the State Department of Education and ask to speak with the Migrant Education Director. Visit the Office of Migrant Educator's (OME) web site (http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/MEP/) for State Directors' contact information. Migrant programs are present in every state (except Hawaii), the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The Office of Migrant Education, 202-260-1164, can also provide contact information on State Directors of Migrant Education.

- Migrant families are also served in regional and migrant Head Start programs and by migrant health clinics. Conduct outreach through their local service centers or by calling the Migrant Education Hot Line, 1-800-234-8848.

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is coordinating an America Reads project in its migrant rural housing developments. Contact Jim Coyle, 202-260-5710, for information about USDA's effort.

- Consider recruiting Federal Work-Study students who are bilingual to work as tutors with migrant families. The Office of Migrant Education has awarded High School Equivalency Program (HEP) and College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) grants to assist older migrant students who may also be available to recruit as tutors. For contact information about HEP and CAMP programs, visit the OME web site at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/MEP.

- Enlist as tutors high school and college students in foreign-language programs who may have insight into the challenges of reading and writing in a second language and can use tutoring as a means to complete community service requirements.

- Ask local partners to sponsor prepaid phone calling cards to keep children in touch with tutors as families travel. Contact distributors of films/video, music, sports equipment, and foods for incentives and awards for participation and achievement in your site.

Including Preschool Age Children

Why This Is Important

Including preschool children in your READ*WRITE*NOW! summer program can increase its effectiveness. The roots of literacy begin in the play of young children, long before children start formal reading instruction. In addition to reading and telling stories to young children, early literacy activities include talking, listening to others talk and to music, engaging in dramatic play, painting, scribbling, drawing, and building with blocks. Because babies begin learning at birth, it is never too early to begin reading to young children.

Tips for Greater Involvement

1. When extending services to children from birth through age 5 who do not yet attend school, either link to an existing early care and education program or create your own early childhood component by including younger children, many of whom are the siblings of the children already being served.

2. Reach younger children by supporting their parents in reading at home, or helping them improve their own reading skills.

3. Reading partners can lead literacy-building activities with young children and can show families activities to do at home.

4. Older children can serve as reading partners for younger children. This pairing will give both older and younger children an opportunity to improve their reading skills.

5. Organization of your program should take into account the types of services already available in your community; local early childhood services are often provided though a variety of programs.

Where You Can Get More Information and Assistance (Federal, State, and Local Resources)

Below is a list of early child care, education, and recreation programs that may be offered in your community. Federal contacts are included in case you need help locating your local counterpart or are interested in model program information. Your local chamber of commerce may also have a list of early childhood resources.

- Your local school district may offer preschool programs in the summer or throughout the year through an Even Start Family Literacy Program, Title I, Special Education, or a locally or state funded program.

  Even Start, tel: 202-260-0991; fax: 202-260-7764
  Web: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SEP./ or
  Title I, tel: 202-260-0826; fax: 202-260-7764
  Web: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SEP./ or
  Special Education, tel: 202-205-5507; fax: 202-260-0416; TDD: 202-205-5467,
  Web: http://www.ed.gov.offices/OSERS/OSEP/

- Some Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant Head Start Centers offer year-round programs. Contact Head Start to get a list of contacts in your area.

  Head Start
  Tel: 202-205-8572; fax: 202-260-9336
  Web: http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb/

- The Child Care Resource and Referral Agency in your city or state will have information about and relationships with a large number of public and private child care centers. If your community does not have a child care resource and referral agency you can find out about local child care programs by contacting your state child care licensing office or the state office that administers child care subsidies.

  National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
  Tel: 202-393-5501; fax: 202- 393-1109

- The National Child Care Information Center keeps an updated list of state child care administrative offices.

  The National Child Care Information Center
  Tel: 1-800-616-2242
  Web: http://ericps.crc.uiuc.edu/nccic/nccichome.html

- You might want to check out the Child Care Bureau's web site.

  Web: http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ccb/

- Many community-based organizations such as the Montessori, YWCA, and YMCA offer high-quality early child care and education programs.

  Tel: 202-835-9043; fax: 202-835-9030

- The Bureau of Indian Affairs FACE Program (Family and Child Education) offers early childhood programs in some areas of the country. The telephone number is 202-208-3601.

- Many local public libraries offer regular story hours and other literacy activities for preschool age children. Call your local library and ask if it would like to include a session to support family reading.

- Family support programs such as Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) serve large numbers of young children and their families. You could reach out to these families when they come to the WIC office. Contact your local WIC program office by telephone 703-305-2746 or web site: http://www.usda.gov/fcs for more information.

- Some pediatricians have realized the importance of early reading and have joined Reach Out and Read in which doctors "prescribe reading" to children and their parents during regular check-ups and in some offices provide free books.

  Tel: 617-534-5701; fax: 617-534-7557

- Many local city or county parks and recreation departments offer recreational programs for young children. Park and recreation agencies are often a community's focal point for children's summer activities. Contact your local parks and recreation department to see if they would be interested in adding a literacy component. The National Recreation and Park Association can also provide guidance and resources; tel: 703-858-0784.

- The Family Services office of your local military base may offer multiple early childhood and family centered programs. Contact your local military base to see how you might coordinate with their efforts.

- Many churches offer summer camps and vacation Bible school programs that provide opportunities for literacy activities, such as storytelling and dramatic play, and often sponsor special literacy projects. Contact a church or religious organization to see how you might coordinate your literacy programs.

This is only a partial list of the resources that might be available in your community. If the groups listed above are already engaged in literacy and language development activities, invite them to be a part of the America Reads Challenge, so you can work together to help all children, starting with our very youngest, learn to read. If a group has not focused on literacy before, think about ways you can work together to include literacy-building activities in its existing programs.